

## Fallen - Arc 1

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## Fallen - Arc 1

by [acaciawastaken \(orphan\\_account\)](#)

### Summary

George, an angel, is kicked out of Heaven after being framed. Dream, a demon, is there to help him return home. George, however, ends up wanting to stay. [story can also be found on wattpad]

THIS FIC WAS WRITTEN WITH PLATONIC SOULMATES IN MIND. BE RESPECTFUL OF THEIR ACTUAL RELATIONSHIP IF YOU WANT TO VIEW MY WRITINGS AS ROMANTIC.

# Chapter 1

GEORGE - LOCATION: HEAVEN, THE COURTHOUSE OF ANGELS

“You have been found guilty.” One angel said, their voice booming. George had all eyes on him. He stepped back, thousands of thoughts rushing through his head.

“This is all wrong!” George shouts, the feathers of his wings ruffling up. “I was framed! Don’t you get it?!”

Another gentler voice spoke. “We do not make mistakes. We are all knowing.”

George was speechless. “What’s going to happen to me?”

“You’ll be... relocated.” The soft voice spoke again. Before George could speak again, he felt himself being restrained and dragged backwards towards the edge of the Angel Courtroom.

He wiggled out of the grasp of the angels and looked down. Underneath Heaven was a sky. Warmer colors, but mostly crimson.

George felt a bitterness as he was eased even closer to the edge. If he was going to be thrown into Hell, it would be by his own hands.

He jumped.

Willingly.

~

DREAM - LOCATION: HELL, THE MAIN OFFICE

Dream was kneeling onto the ground, aggressively scrubbing a bloodstain with a sponge. Hell’s janitor.

It was the same stain he had been cleaning for the past hundred years. It never left. Dream seemed to have forgotten that he was in Hell, and it’d never leave.

It was on a white carpet as well, which made cleaning ten times more difficult.

He was cleaning in the same hallway, hearing the same demons talk. However, the conversations today stood out.

“We’re getting an angel dropped here today.” The first voice said.

“Oh? What’s this one do? I don’t want to deal with another angel sobbing and begging for pity. They’re all crybabies.” The second voice asked.

“This one is interesting. It turns out this one was tampering with human lives, purposefully helping them out,” The first one spoke again. “Ran into them once, they’re a pain.”

“We should have that janitor kid take them.” The second voice was saying.

Dream had stood up from his kneeling position, watching the two demons talk. He watched as the taller one approached the door to enter the hallway.

“Dream, lovely to see your perseverance.” The tall one said, stepping closer to Dream.

“Gee, thank you. Do you need something?” Dream asked, quickly picking up the sponge he left on the ground.

“We’re getting a new arrival from Heaven. Ya don’t see those too often.”

“Ah, cool,” Dream replies, uninterested. “Do you want me to show that one around or something?”

The taller demon looked amused. “Yes, actually. You know where to find the landing spot.”

“I’ll get right to it.” Dream quickly says, rushing out of the office building. The office was fairly close to the landing site, which means he heard a lot of screaming.

The landing area was a crater fenced off by velvet ropes. At the bottom of the crater, there were a lot of indents that showed how certain people landed. Most didn’t land on their feet.

He waited. Landing times varied from demon to demon. There was a screen that showed the estimated landing time.

Two minutes.

~

## GEORGE - ALMOST IN HELL

Agony. His back felt like it was on fire. At the speed he was falling, it wasn’t surprising.

Falling felt numb. Like he was in jello. Time didn’t feel real. He didn’t dare to look at his surroundings. He only kept looking up.

Suddenly, he felt himself slam into concrete. The sudden change in temperature was shocking. He felt like he was in a microwave, which was the best way he could describe how he felt,

George had landed on his back. Yet, it didn’t hurt. He didn’t dare move, frozen in his sprawled out position.

He could hear footsteps. It sounded like someone stepping in gravel. In the corner of George’s eye. He saw a pair of legs. The person kneeled down and held a hand in front of George’s face.

“Hey, get up.” The person said. George didn’t move. The stranger let out a huff of frustration. George felt his hand being forcefully grabbed.

George was forced to turn his head to look at the person. Demon. The demon was tall. Extremely tall. They wore a mask and had green demon horns.

Yeah, George had definitely arrived. He shakily stood up and looked at the demon who helped him. “Who exactly are you?”

“I’m Dream. I was assigned to help you,” Dream said. “I don’t like working with former angels a lot, though. I can’t complain too much, at least i’m not stuck doing janitor work.”

George couldn’t help but chuckle. “Janitors? In Hell? That’s ridiculous.”

“Someone had to do it, angel.” He replied. “I gotta show you around or something. This place is pretty infinite, don’t get lost.” Dream had already turned on his heel and began walking away.

“A-alright,” George says, running so he could catch up. Surprisingly, Hell looked normal. Most buildings were painted shades of red, gray and black. There were plants and seemingly normal animals. “You’d expect this place to be a little scarier.”

“Eh, this is just the first floor. Underneath us is the scary stuff. Well, scary is subjective.” Dream explained. “We’re walking down some of the residence areas.”

“What other areas are there?” George asks, finally catching up. Dream and George are standing side by side now, walking at around the same pace.

Dream sighs, clearly thinking of what to say. “Well, to put it in a nice way, there’s the work areas, and the overgrown shitty areas. Your little Heaven is obviously much better.”

“Yeah, obviously Heaven is a lot better. It’s really hot here. There’s no sun, though.”

“It’s supposed to be like that. Nobody here really likes hot weather, even me, and I was from Florida,” Dream rolled up his sleeves. A habit. “So, how’d you get kicked out?”

George froze in his tracks. “Well, I was framed, I can’t say too much. I apparently screwed with the lives of humans.”

“Framed? Sounds pretty made up.” Dream turns back to George, realizing he had stopped walking. “Do you have any idea who could’ve done it?”

“No, not on the top of my head.” George says. “Is there a way to... appeal or something?”

“Yeah, I’ve tried. It’s all a gamble when it comes to what judge you get.”

“Oh? Who was it?” There’s a silence between the two. “So I know which judges to avoid.”

“Well, the one I got is named Nick. Sap. Whatever he’s called. He’s really picky and uses his past experiences to decide your case.” Dream says.

“Nick? Alrighty then. I wanna go and appeal my case. I don’t deserve this!” George complained, throwing his hands in the air. He ignored the passerby demons giving him annoyed glances.

“Angel, you just got here. You might want to settle in a little first. You... can stay at my place.”

“Wait, do demons actually sleep?” George asks, still sounding frustrated from his outburst.

“Most of us do. We still have human needs here,” Dream says, “Includes hunger and all that stuff.”

“Hunger? Agh, this place sounds awful.” George complains again. “I have no choice, huh?”

Dream nods slightly. He grabs George’s wrist and guides him through the neighborhood to his house.

It’s a grey house, and it looks extremely average compared to other houses. There’s a cat sitting on the patio. Upon seeing Dream, the cat gets up and rushes towards Dream.

“There’s animals here too?” George asks, a smile appearing on his face upon seeing the cat.

Dream is holding the cat and looking at George with an awkward silence. “Let’s go inside. You don’t want to know about the animals.”

## Chapter 2

### DREAM AND GEORGE: HELL, DREAM'S HOUSE

Dream fumbled with a set of keys in his hands, eventually holding out a silver rusted key. In one arm was a cat, so he struggled to open the door with one hand. Eventually, a clicking noise indicated that the door unlocked.

He leaned against the door to open it. George hesitantly stepped inside and waited for Dream to walk in as well.

The cat jumped out of Dream's arms, and a gentle pattering noise indicated the cat was walking on some sort of tile. It was peaceful, in a way.

The house was cooler than it was outside, which was a relief. The entire house was dimly lit, and the walls were painted a green color.

"So, where should I sleep?" George asked, staring up at Dream. Dream puts his house keys on a hook hanging on his wall before turning to George.

"The couch. If you do end up staying here forever, maybe we can sleep in the same bed." Dream says jokingly.

"You're not serious, of course," George mutters. "You demons are so... sarcastic."

Dream grabs George's wrist again and brings him to a living room. The room is dark. "There's the couch, I can bring a blanket or whatever you need." Dream says, turning on a lamp. The living room in its full light was rather welcoming, having a lot of potted plants.

"This room reminds me of my entire house. Before I... you know." George says. He sits down and tests the couch, and eventually sinks into it.

"Before you got kicked out or died?" Dream asks.

"I'd rather not," George says. "Can I get a blanket or something? Not a comforter or anything too big."

Dream gives an annoyed glance. "Of course. Stay here."

~

Dream walks up the stairs, ignoring how dark it was. He walks into his room, which at the moment was pretty organized. There's a small walk-in closet. He crouches down and digs through a bunch of folded blankets before pulling out a fluffy grey one.

He carelessly holds it, ignoring the fact it was unfolding and dragging on the floor a little. Stepping outside of his room, Dream sees his cat sitting down in the middle of the hallway.

Dream hesitated for a moment before setting the blanket down. He sits cross legged on the floor and lets the cat approach him. "Hey Patches. I'm home earlier than normal, huh?"

Patches let out a little meow in response. Dream quietly chuckles and scratches his cat, relaxing at the soft texture of fur in between his fingers.

Dream finally stops petting the cat. He stands up and grabs the blanket. He rushes down the stairs quickly and walks into the living room.

“What took you so long?” George asked. His tone sounded rather different though. More joking and relaxed.

“My cat,” Dream replies. He holds out the grey blanket and lets George take it. George runs his hand over the soft texture. “So, sleep when you want. If you need something to eat, ask me.”

“What food is there even? I’m sure it’s all gross stuff, like I heard you only eat worms! Or-or humans!” George begins to ramble on about other disgusting foods. Dream lets him ramble for a while, finding all the assumptions amusing.

“Okay, professional researcher. It’s just whatever you can make with the stuff in your fridge. You gotta be creative.” Dream explains. “Though, worms are always a good way to treat yourself.”

George’s face quickly twists to disgust. “Have you eaten those?”

Dream lets out a wheeze. Stupid wheeze. If there were tea kettles in Hell, George was staring directly at one.

“Demons are so sarcastic,” Dream says, making fun of what George said earlier. “I haven’t, honestly.”

George seems to relax upon hearing that. George scoots over on the couch and pats the empty spot next to him. “So, Dream. Hypothetically, if I were to get stuck here, I’d like to get to know you a little better.”

“You’re being quick to trust me. Sure, ask me anything.” Dream says, sitting down next to him.

“Is Dream your real name?” George asks.

“No. I’m not telling my real name.” Dream replies, already seeming uncomfortable. “I’m not too happy with my life before coming here.”

George’s face flushed in embarrassment. Stupid question. “Okay. Were you kicked out of Heaven or do you actually belong here?”

“You’re asking some really personal stuff,” Dream dismisses yet another question. “Let me ask you something George. How long were you in Heaven before you got kicked out?”

“Hypocrite,” George mutters. “99 years. Almost 100. Isn’t that funny? I was so close to the hundreds.”

“Alright,” Dream sighs. “Ask me something personal. Just not my name or how I got here.”

George is quiet for a moment, likely brainstorming a question. “Okay, Dream. What is the worst choice you made while on Earth?”

“Honestly? Going to college and not studying what I was actually interested in. I studied computer science despite it not being my main passion.”

“What would you want to major in?” George asks, containing some excitement. Of course, George was a programmer while on Earth, so now he was fully interested.

“English, definitely. I wrote a lot, and I was that one kid who actually enjoyed English class.”

Dream says, gesturing towards a small desk in the living room.

On the desk was a stack of papers, with pencils and highlighters lined up neatly next to each other. There was one sheet of paper with writing on it, some words highlighted with a color George couldn't identify.

"One more question," George quickly says, sounding a little hesitant. "Why do you wear a mask?"

There's silence between the two. George couldn't help but stare at Dream's mask, a permanent smiley face drawn into it. There's two lines above the eyes that make the mask look angry.

Dream eventually breaks the silence. "A part of my face. I don't like it all too much."

"Why do you care about what you look like?"

"Personal matters," Dream says, getting up from his spot on the couch. "I'm going to make food."

"Wait, can I make it instead? If I'm going to be stuck here, I gotta get used to stuff!"

Dream stops walking and turns back. "You keep saying 'if I get stuck here'. Stop, you're an angel, you're supposed to be sickeningly positive."

George rolls his eyes and stands up from the couch as well. "Please let me do this! You're letting me stay here, it makes sense for me to return the favor."

"Fine." Dream says, moving away so that George can enter the kitchen. Dream turns on the light, which was hidden behind the fridge.

Stepping out of the kitchen, Dream lets out a quiet sigh as he sits back down on the couch. Angels were nice. Ridiculously nice. Even to demons. It was confusing.

Dream could hear the faint noises of kitchen utensils and the distinct sound of a knife hitting a wooden cutting board. The small simple noises were so calming.

The sound of cabinets opening and closing. The sounds of plates being placed on counters. It was all so familiar to Dream.

In a few moments, George entered the living room with a plate with random foods.

"It's a snack tray! My mom would make those for me a lot when I was little!" George quickly explains, sounding nervous. Dream smiled at the consideration. Familiar.

Dream reached to the plate, grabbing a few chips. "This is perfect. I'm... glad you already feel comfortable here."

The two sit next to each other, forgetting about their worries. Only for a little bit. That little amount of time was just enough, though.

## Chapter 3

The sound of running water. Dream held a plate in his hand, running it over the sink faucet. Holding a sponge, he gripped it and felt the soapy suds run through his fingers.

He eventually put the plate away and entered the living room. George was lying there, probably trying to fall asleep. Dream turned off the lamp, and noticed that George was slowly getting uncovered.

Dream took the blanket and covered George up again, sighing. At least George would be getting a wink of sleep.

Walking up the stairs, Dream entered his own room, where his cat was waiting. He sighed and flopped down next to the cat, not even bothering to get under the covers. He stared. The ceiling was bland and tasteless.

Hell was boring. Dream only did the same things over and over. Now he had a fallen angel living in his house. The thought of that was terrifying. He was dedicating himself to something... someone... else.

Dream needed to sleep. He flipped onto his side, feeling his cat snuggle up close to his chest. That was enough for him to finally sleep.

~

George was awoken by the sound of a phone ringing. Sitting up, George wiggled himself out of the blanket. His legs felt like jelly as he walked towards the source of the ringing. Shakily, he took the phone and held it against his ear.

“Dream? Are you going to be able to make it today?” A gentle voice asked. “I haven’t seen you in ages!”

“Uh, this isn’t Dream,” George says hesitantly. Even though the voice on the other end of the phone was gentle, he was terrified to speak more than a few words. “I’m George... I’m staying at Dream’s house though.”

“Ah, I got it. Can you get Dream?”

“Yeah, I can. Give me a second.” George says, setting the phone down on a nearby tabletop. He rushed upstairs into Dream’s room and gently opened the door.

Dream was awake. He was sitting cross-legged on the bed in silence. The same cat from last night was sitting in his lap. Dream turned his head to look at George. “What?”

George avoided eye contact for a moment, not expecting Dream to be awake. “There’s someone on the phone asking for you.”

Dream let out a sigh of annoyance as he moved Patches out of his lap. He quickly rushed down the stairs. Odd. He was so quick to go. It must’ve been important.

Dream picked up the phone that was settled down and held it against his ear. “Let me guess, Darryl?”



“Of course it’s me! And don’t call me Darryl!” Bad says, his voice slightly muffled, likely from poor connection. “I want to meet up again. Bring that George guy as well please.”

“Alright, fine,” Dream says, beginning to pace around the room. “The normal spot?”

“Yeah. See you there.”

The dial tone indicated that Bad hung up. Dream put the phone back. “Goerge, we’re going somewhere!”

There were footsteps, then George showed up at the bottom of the stairs wearing a different outfit. It was a blue shirt tied on the side by an elastic. “I borrowed one of your shirts.”

“I can tell, it’s way too big on you,” Dream says, walking towards his front door. He grabs the keys that were hanging from the nearby wall. He fumbles with the door before it unlocks. Dream steps outside, and George follows soon after.

“Where are we going?” George asks, trying to keep up with Dream’s eager pace. “Are we meeting that person from earlier?”

“Yep, we’re meeting him. Luckily, the meetup spot isn’t too far. We just gotta go up an elevator.” Dream replies, picking up speed yet again.

After walking for a while, George and Dream were standing in front of an elevator. Dream quickly pushed the up arrow button and waited for the door to open up.

It opened up, and the two stepped inside. Dream reached out yet again and pressed a button labeled ‘floor 4’.

The doors closed. Surprisingly, no other demons were hopping on. The elevator began moving upwards, which caused Dream to step back and hold onto the handrail. George leaned against the wall opposite from Dream.

After a minute or two, the elevator halted and the doors opened. The lighting was much different then just a few minutes ago. Wherever they were, the entire area was glowing a soft green color. It looked like a small park, with a water fountain and a lot of colorful plants.

Sitting down on a bench was a person, wearing a black and red hoodie. He had light brown hair and glasses. Upon seeing the pair, they got up. “Hey, Dream! Glad to see you!”

“Its been a while, huh Bad? Been busy scrubbing the same floor,” Dream says, chuckling. “Now I have to take care of a fallen angel.”

“Just quit your job, you muffin head! Doesn’t it get boring?” Bad says, sounding rather disappointed.

Bad was so caring. Angels in general were so sweet. It annoyed Dream to no end, but Bad was the closest friend he had.

George stood awkwardly, listening to the two talk, but never really stepping in. Everything was so unfamiliar. George didn’t even recognize Bad, and he knew just about every angel.

“So, Bad, you’re the beacon of wisdom. I need your help,” Dream begins, his eyes wandering towards George. “Angel over there wants to have his case reconsidered, and I think you’re the best help we can get.”

“I’m glad you can trust me! I’d like a one-on-one with him though... To talk about the case, of course.” Bad says, his tone genuine. Dream nods and leaves the general area. Bad approaches George, who is standing a few feet away from him.

“So, George, was it? I’m Bad. I can help you with your case, if you didn’t overhear.”

George hesitantly held out his hand. Bad shook George’s hand, and was the first to pull away. George hesitates to speak. “To put things easily, I was framed.”

“Ah, I used to work with those cases a lot. What did you... do?” Bad asks, trying to be careful with his words. A lot of the time, talking about what happened in cases was traumatic. Bad had learned to be careful.

“I apparently interfered with the lives of some humans. You need to be on Earth to do stuff like that, and I honestly haven’t gone to Earth since... you know.” George says, nervously bouncing on his heels.

“Really? They should’ve seen that on your records then. Whoever framed you might be good at forgery,” Bad explains. “So the person might be really close to you.”

That never crossed George’s mind. George felt betrayed. He already had trust issues before, but now...? Its worse. However, while George knew the names of most of the angels, he never really talked to any of them. He just hung out by himself in Heaven.

George was terrified to speak again. He was at a loss for words. “Do you have any idea who could have done it?”

Bad shakes his head. “I’d need to check millions of files to find a specific person. Because, well, everyone in Heaven and Hell has a file that lists talents. I’d need to sift through all the files of people who did forgery. It’s a lot more people than you think.”

“Well, are there any other options?” George asks. He was already out of ideas.

Bad smiled. “I can go to Heaven and ask for the files relating to your case. I can copy them and send them over to you... you know, to make sure they weren’t making anything up.”

“That’s perfect, actually,” George says. “Will Dream get in trouble for this?”

“Hopefully not. If they know they were sent by me, he’ll be safe,” Bad explains. “We’ll get you back, I promise.”

Yeah.

There was that spark of hope.

George wouldn’t want to stay.

## Chapter 4

Dream and George sat side by side on a porch swing, watching as people and animals walked by their field of vision. Anything to stay distracted. Ever since the two returned home after meeting Bad, there was a tension in the air.

Anticipation, mostly. There was also the lingering thought that George would most likely be stuck here forever. That didn't bother Dream too much, because he needed a friend. George, however, needed a comfortable place to call home.

This wasn't comfortable. The temperature was purposefully set to be annoying, and it never got cooler. The only 'natural' noises that could be heard were the crackling noises of distant fires. Everything else was made by something else. There was no noise when the wind blew, no birds chirping despite there being birds.

Hell was meant to be uncomfortable. Dream couldn't help but be sad at the idea of George being stuck. He didn't deserve it.

George turned his head to face the person next to him, who seemed to be zoning out. That was a good thing. Dream had been stressing out almost constantly since they got home, and he'd keep ranting about the littlest things. He had a short temper, but that was an understatement.

George slowly lifted his hand up and shook Dream's shoulder, which seemed to get Dream out of his trance. Dream gave a tired glance at him, and eventually spoke.

"George, do you need something?" He asks. His tone is uneasy and slow, like he's trying really hard to keep his composure.

"Are you okay? That's what I need to know." George replies, gentle squeezing Dream's shoulder. His hand is immediately brushed off with a rather rough grip, causing George to pull it away out of fear.

Dream doesn't bother to apologize for being careless. "You're gonna get me in trouble if they find out."

"We'll be fine," George tries to reassure. "Bad told me that since he would be the one to send the documents, things would be fine."

"Bad was a lawyer. Lawyers here always tell white lies. Angels are the main offender. I would know."

"What does that even mean?! You're supposed to be helping me out! You're being so... vague!" George whisper-yells, trying not to catch the attention of others.

"You don't trust anyone here. Anyone. Even me." Dream says, standing up from his seat.

"Wait! Don't go!" George says, also shooting up from his seat. He reaches out and grabs Dream's wrist. "How could I NOT trust you? You're willingly letting me stay at your place!"

"Honestly? You're only here because I had no other choice," Dream says, trying to remove George's hand from his wrist, but it wouldn't budge. "Let me go."

"I-I can't do that! We need to work together here!"

Dream lets out a sigh of annoyance, turning to face George. He has tears in his eyes. Angels are crybabies. Annoyance. "George, just face it! There's a really high chance you'll be stuck here. And if that's the case, you can't stay with me! I can't handle something like that!"

"At least there's a chance..." George mutters, finally letting go of Dream's wrist. The two step away from each other in a deadly silence.

Dream was an enigma. Flies off the handle easily. Terrifying in a way. One moment he was nice, and the other... he was like this. George didn't understand. He was trying his best to gain Dream's trust.

It never worked. George always tried to make small talk, but the conversations always ended the same. Miscommunication.

"Look, George. I see what you're doing. You're getting attached," Dream says, trying to step closer. "It's not worth it."

George finally understood. Dream was... traumatized. By something. Someone?

"Hey," George speaks softly, trying to make eye contact with Dream. With a mask on, however, it was difficult. "Let's talk to each other. You obviously have a lot on your mind."

Those few words seemed to be a breakthrough. Dream seemed to relax a little. "Let's go inside. I don't want anyone overhearing."

George was the first to enter the house for once. The two sat on the couch next to each other, this time, their knees pointing towards each other to try and make 'eye' contact.

"The mask. Let's talk about that first," George says, boldly. Whatever anxious demeanor that he had melting away into a more confident one.

Even though the mask never changed expressions, it was obvious that Dream was nervous. "I'll take it off." Dream reaches his hands for the back of his head and unties the mask. Now, the mask was only being held on by his hands.

The mask is off. George makes the first attempt at eye contact. Dream, however, focuses his gaze on something outside.

Dream, to put it simply, was not what George expected. Freckles. His eyes? Like something from a video game, honestly. A mix of teal-green and a lime green.

George reaches out yet again, gently turning Dream's head to face him. "Look at me."

Dream is silent, but looks at George. "Why did I need to remove my mask for this?"

"Because with that mask on, you keep pretending. It's tiring. I want honesty. I expect honesty. From you, a demon."

"That's kinda sad," Dream manages to joke, a small smile on his face. "Any other demands?"

"Talk to me," George replies, his tone gentle. "Why do you keep... lashing out?"

"You remind me of myself," Dream explains, speaking a little louder than normal. George's face twists to an expression of confusion. "Trying to seek redemption."

“What...?” George’s mind is rushing at a million miles a minute. “Were you an angel?”

“It’s complicated. I don’t know how to phrase it.”

“No, if we’re similar... You got kicked out too.”

Dream shakes his head at that. “About a hundred years ago, I came here for a business trip, and they just never let me go. So, over the years, I adopted a demon form and... lost my angel stuff.”

It made sense. He had the kindness to be an angel, but was burying that part of himself behind a mask... a persona.

Dream stood up from his seat, but didn’t put the mask back on. “The papers should be arriving some time soon, try and remember stuff from Heaven. Your memory gets foggy after a while here. I’d write it down.”

George nodded and got up as well, walking over to Dream’s small desk with the writings. Taking a blank sheet of paper, George writes everything he can remember.

His house. His job. The angels he talked to a lot. An alibi for what happened the day he was framed.

It would all come together eventually.

## Chapter 5

### Chapter Notes

[So, this book has a Spotify playlist to go along with it. If you're reading this, well you're obviously reading this story on Ao3. Since on Wattpad you can't copy links, this is an Ao3 reader exclusive thing :) ]

[<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2W52B4otomHmEdsDaMjhQt>]

Dream wished things could stay the way they were. He was finally able to open up to someone. He took his mask off for the first time in a hundred years.

He's been waiting a long time for that kind of trust. And he trusted someone so easily. He told pretty much a stranger his biggest secret.

He didn't feel like a demon. Demons were supposed to wreak havoc and be... emotionless.

Dream felt things. He observed things. He'd carefully watch the mannerisms of George. The quietest noises in the house were kept track of. It was relaxing. He felt solace in the quiet.

However, there were no noises. George had gone out by himself to explore, and his cat was out doing cat things. Dream didn't want to move.

He's being clingy. George has only been gone for half an hour. That was long enough. Dream already missed hearing George laugh, or doing little things like putting a hand on his shoulder.

The quiet wasn't always good.

~

George was alone, which could be a good thing. In this case, he was walking by himself to the post office.

The documents had arrived, apparently. Though for some reason, they weren't brought to Dream's house specifically.

Stepping into the post office, the first thing George noticed was that it was empty. Set to the side were the mailboxes, one which had Dream's name on it. Not his real name. Just 'Dream'.

Taking a set of keys out of his pocket, George unlocked the mailbox and pulled out an envelope, with the name "Bad" neatly written on it.

Holding the envelope in his left hand, George turned to return back home. He needed to compare the information. The envelope was fairly heavy, hinting at the fact there were a lot of papers.

He'd likely be pulling an all-nighter to read through everything. That wasn't too big of a deal. Sleep wasn't a necessity.

Time felt different. What was a 15 minute walk to the post office felt like an hour long walk back. Was it the papers in his hands? The fact that everything about George's life was written in them was unsettling. He didn't want to open it. There were probably things he didn't want to read in there.

George finds himself in front of the same grey house. Dream's cat is sitting on the porch, giving a distant judging stare. The door was unlocked, so he just stepped inside.

Dream was probably upstairs. George went to the desk where there were writings and set them aside. He sat down and set the envelope in front of himself and opened it.

Skimming the paper, most information was correct. His full name, age, height... all of that. It was accurate. Of course it was. It was written by those really smart angels.

The next page was information about his case. Written, it was clearly stated that George left Earth.

He never left Heaven. It was impossible. Angels needed permission to go to Earth. In order to do that, the angel would need to sign their name. George never did such a thing.

Bad's theory was right. Forgery. That or one of the angels who handles the archives copied his signature.

Fraud.

George was hurt, of course. However, figuring out that it was someone who had access to the archives narrowed down the list of suspects by a significant amount.

That was the only good news today. George walked away from the papers, not bothering to read the rest. Dream would be disappointed, but that didn't matter.

George wanted to put the effort. He really did. But a force was stopping him. He wanted to go home. He had to.

In the past few days, though, George has already felt happier than he has in a hundred years.

He couldn't back out. He didn't want to waste the time of Dream or Bad.

Obligation to do things can be hurtful. George wasn't thinking of himself. He was only thinking about keeping Dream happy.

~

Bad was pacing up and down a hallway. The walls lined with file cabinets. It stretched on forever.

Since he first entered the archives to steal George's file, Bad couldn't help but be curious.

What was in Dream's file? Surely, it was still here.

The thing was, Bad didn't know Dream's real name. It was a mere nickname, so it made finding the file way harder than it already was.

Frustration. Bad was always on the move, looking for something new to do. His new goal was to learn more about Dream.

Dream had been declared missing about eighty years ago. No other angels knew about Dream but him.

Secrets were a burden, that's for sure. Bad was luckily very trustworthy. Surely, by now, Dream would be comfortable saying his real name.

There wasn't a soul who knew. So, when Dream never returned that one day, nobody knew how to find Dream's file to get a clue of where he was.

Bad turned at his heel to go to the nearest phone. Getting Dream on the line wouldn't be too difficult since he was probably stuck at home caring for George.

He picked up the phone in one hand and punched the phone number in with another. There was ringing in his ear. He stood in anticipation, waiting for someone to pick up.

"Hey, Bad?" Dream could be heard from the other side. There was the faint noise of fire crackling in the background.

"This might be personal, but I want to know something. What's your real name?" Bad was quick to say. Straight to the point to avoid forgetting the question.

There was silence. Eventually, Dream spoke back. "It's Clay."

"Clay?"

"You're the first to know. Don't do anything stupid with that information."

Bad let out a sigh of annoyance. So defensive. He just wanted to be trusted. "I won't. I'm trying to find your files."

"Why? You wouldn't find anything special."

"I want to see if they're still here. You're supposed to be missing, right?"

Again, no response. The awkwardness during phone calls between the two was always unbearable.

"Wouldn't they get rid of my files by now?" Dream asks. In the background, a door shutting could be heard, along with some muffled yelling, likely from George.

"Probably not," Bad says, rather confidently. "Some people still talk about your disappearance."

"Oh wow..." Dream replies, his voice dripping with sarcasm. Bad was expecting a sarcastic reaction.

"It's mostly conspiracy theorists, it's quite funny to eavesdrop on conversations like that."

On Dream's side on the phone, more angry yelling from George could be heard. Dream wasn't yelling back, but was... wheezing. "I gotta go. George did something stupid."

Bad nodded, hanging up before Dream could say anything else.

He was happy for Dream. He'd finally found someone trustworthy. So quickly.



It took ages for Bad to gain Dream's trust... so he couldn't help but be a little hurt.

Upsetting, even.

A tear.

He cried.

He felt temporary.

He worked so hard, just for his efforts to be extinguished in a matter of days.

There was an ache that couldn't be described.

## Chapter 6

It was late. Dream snuck downstairs and to his writing table. Lying there was George's file, open for him to see.

There was a lot to take in.

He had no idea George was colorblind, first of all. He'd been describing colors and had no idea George couldn't appreciate them.

Dream was painfully oblivious when it came to things like that. He never picked up on mannerisms or attempts at friendship. He always took sarcasm as a punch to the face, or let jokes fly over his head.

He continued reading the file, finding out small details like his pets. Reading about things like that was heartwarming.

Slowly, Dream closed the file upon feeling Patches brush against his leg. He picked up the cat and simply pet her. Little things were amazing. The tingly feeling in his hands when his cat purred, the fur. It felt like a home he never really had.

~

When the morning came, George's anxiety was through the roof. Today, he'd be resubmitting his case in an attempt to be 'released'.

It was terrifying. George had been warned of a lawyer named... Nick? Knowing his luck, he'd get assigned to him and would be screwed.

Dream and George sat next to each other on a bus. With every speed bump the bus sped over, the more anxious George got.

Dream seemed indifferent, surprisingly. He'd finally stopped wearing the mask, but his expressions were still blank. He'd smile or wheeze when a joke was made, but other than that he wore the same face.

The bus finally stopped after what felt like forever. George stepped out of the bus first, and for a moment forgot the weight of the situation he was in.

Everything was beautiful. He could tell it was despite not seeing that many colors. The courthouse area felt ancient and overgrown, thick vines covering most of the quartz pillars.

Dream eventually stepped ahead of George and entered the courthouse. Again, things were pleasant. There weren't too many people except for a few security guards and actual residents.

The line was short, which in some ways was unlucky because George had yet to rehearse what he'd say to the person who got assigned to him.

The person at the front desk was soft spoken, which eased George's nerves. "Hello. What do you need?"

"I need to meet with a judge. I-I need them to reconsider my case." George replied, fidgeting with his fingers. Those few words were enough to make himself nervous again.

“Of course,” The person said, a smile on their face. “You got lucky, only one of our judges is in today. First door on the left.” They say, pointing to a hallway to the left of George.

George begins to walk towards the hallway before realizing Dream wasn’t following. “Dream! Aren’t you coming?” He shouted. There was a distance between the two, so the yelling was necessary.

“This is your battle, not mine!” Dream shouts, then giving a reassuring thumbs up.

That gesture wasn’t helping. George shouted yet again. “Come on! I need you!”

Dream rolled his eyes, but somehow not in an annoyed way. He stayed firm in his place, however.

It took a moment, but George finally went down the hall, ready to speak and defend himself.

The first door on the left had a label on it that read ‘Judge Nick’.

Just his luck. It was the judge Dream warned George about. He almost wanted to back out and accept his fate that he’d be stuck. He felt himself move on his own and open the door.

In front of him was what looked like a normal person compared to everyone else. The judge didn’t have a halo or demon horns.

“You’re the one they sent?” The judge asked, sounding rather bored. “Just call me Sap. Don’t question it.”

George felt intimidated by Sap. This person would decide his fate, most likely. Or be a heavy contributor on how the case turned out. “My name is George. I’d like to have my conviction reconsidered.”

“Using the big words, huh?” Sap said, spinning around in his chair. A wheeled one. Sap shuffled through a few files before pulling out one with George’s name on it. Sap read through the file. It felt like ages before he spoke again. “Tampering with the lives of humans, huh?”

“I was framed, that’s the thing,” George said, finally building up some confidence. It felt like Dream was there, cheering him on. “I think it’s someone who has access to the archives.”

“Dude. That’s still hundreds of angels and demons. That doesn’t exactly narrow things down.”

“How about I narrow it down a little more? Someone who is good at forgery.”

Sap raises an eyebrow at the statement. “Ah, that actually gets us somewhere. Maybe you stand a chance, angel.”

Being called angel by someone that wasn’t Dream was unsettling. Everything about this situation was unsettling. Things seemed too good to be true. The judge was actually putting some effort, even though Dream warned otherwise.

“Honestly, though. Why are you bothering? I’m seeing your file, and it says here you went to Earth. Your signature is there. It matches your registration one. The forgery? Come on. That’s a pretty common excuse.” Sap says, his words sounding jumbled and effortless.

Now that’s what George expected. The carelessness and completely disregarding his previous statements. George was lucky to even put a sentence together to defend himself. “I’ve never left Heaven. I’d been in Heaven 99 years! I don’t even know what new tech Earth has developed.”

“Honestly, nobody here knows what the humans are up to.”

Lazy. Lazy replies. So frustrating. George had begun bouncing his knee nervously, listening to the noise of his heel bouncing on tile. “Does my file say what I did specifically? I apparently interfered with human lives, but how so?”

Sap skimmed through the file again. “Yes, actually. You... well, as stereotypical as it sounds, used a miracle to save a family from a house fire. They were destined to die that day, I hope you’re aware.”

“No, I wasn’t aware, actually. Since I wasn’t fucking there.”

“Swearing, huh?” Sap mutters to himself. “You’re not exactly winning me over here.”

Sap closes George’s file, and on a separate piece of paper begins writing down the conversation between the two. “I’ll send this over to the big guys and they’ll decide what to do with you.”

“Wait, that’s all the time I get?” George says, immediately panicking again.

“Yeah, there’s hundreds of people waiting for their turn to complain as well.” With a simple hand gesture from Sap, George knew his time was up.

George felt like his legs were jelly. Again. Like when he first arrived in Hell. Everything was so unfair. He understood everything now. He understood why Dream didn’t like Sap. Or why Dream kept telling George that he’d likely be stuck forever.

Dream was being honest. Brutally honest. Which, for the most part, George admired in a person. He stepped out of Sap’s office and heard the door slam behind him.

The walk to where Dream was waiting felt like an agonizing crawl. It felt like for every step he took, time moves slower. The weight of... everything hit him like a truck. When he finally did meet up with Dream again, he kept his composure.

“Hey, how’d things go?” Dream asked, sounding gentle. George felt a hand on his shoulder. He didn’t brush it off like normal, but he wanted it to stay. A touch of comfort.

Lying is sometimes needed. When you want to make people happy, you lie, no matter what the truth is. “It went great. I didn’t get Nick. I’m feeling... confident.”

For a moment, it looked like the conversation was over. Then, it was obvious. The silence felt too good to be true. Dream could see right through George’s lie.

George had been lying. A lot. About the littlest things. George refused to reply.

“Why?” Dream said, his voice but a mere whisper. “Why do you always lie? Especially to me? You realize that I trust you so much, right? Can you please, for once, be honest with me?”

## Chapter 7

“I got Nick- Uh, Sap. He only really talked to me for a few minutes, and it was mostly him being sarcastic.”

Dream looked visibly upset at that statement. “Of course you got him. Hell is always against angels in one way or another. We’re going home.”

The bus ride back was more tense. The two didn’t speak to each other at all. The only noises that could be heard was the bus’ radio playing old songs, which Dream would occasionally hum along to.

The two stepped off of the bus stop, still not speaking to each other. They still did their typical routine, George entering the house first and immediately petting the cat while Dream would begin making food.

It wasn’t the same.

The moments of silence happened quite frequently, though. The two would sit in silence and just enjoy each other’s presence. It felt different today.

Dream wasn’t cooking. He just sat down in silence, looking at George whenever he passed by. He’d give a look of pity.

When George passed by once more, Dream finally spoke.

“George, I have to leave for a bit. I have actual work to do. Janitor work.” The last part is said in an embarrassed tone.

“You... you still haven’t quit that job?” George asks. He’s holding back laughter. The fact that Dream still kept his job was ridiculous.

Dream thought for a moment. Was staying at his job really worth it? No. “About that, I was planning on quitting. I was blindly listening to orders without realizing how pointless what I was doing was.”

So, Dream picked up his phone and dialed his boss. He said the words. He quit. A heavy weight seemed to lift off his shoulders as he hung up.

George was watching from the other room, clearly shocked. “I didn’t expect you to do that, honestly.”

“I had to quit eventually. I guess you’re my voice of reason. Like the actual angel on my shoulder.”

It was three simple sentences, but it was enough for George to finally put on a smile. “Yeah, I guess I am.”

Everything was different. Dream was showing his face, so every conversation between the two felt genuine. Smiles felt real... because they were visible.

George steps towards George. “I’m sorry. I don’t know if you can forgive me, honestly. I’ve lied a lot and-“

“I understand,” Dream cuts George off rather abruptly. “I haven’t been too honest either.

Obviously, my real name isn't Dream. It's... Clay."

"Clay? I'll be honest and say I prefer Dream."

"Please don't call me Clay though. I don't like it."

"Gotcha." George gives awkward fingers guns, causing Dream to laugh. Not a wheezing laugh, but a normal one was nice enough.

Relationships were a rollercoaster. It was always so quick. One moment, the two were close and laughing, and the other they refused to speak to each other.

It was what Dream was looking for. A reliable friend that he can always call. Bad was his friend, yes, but he was constantly busy.

George just needed a friend.

~

Sap watched as yet another person left his office.

Another rejection. Nobody was worth his time or effort.

George had him intrigued. He seemed like he was actually innocent. Sap kept trying to convince himself otherwise.

There's no way that his boss would find George innocent, and for once, that was bothersome.

He kept clicking one of his pens inbetween visitors, brainstorming. How could he make the case turn in George's favor?

He pulled out a new sheet of paper. What could he possibly do to convince the other judges of his innocence?

They wouldn't expect him of all people to defend someone. Most of the time, Sap would just be careless and send the person away without a regret.

He'd feel regret if George stayed. Sap already had a reputation of being a ruthless person, so being taken seriously would be a chore.

Sap was confused. Everything has been confusing lately. Ever since he told Dream to take care of George, everything has been... off.

Angels screwed everything up. He couldn't bring himself to hate them, though. He admired the purity and kindness.

Demons on the other hand were a different story. Cold and always sarcastic. He admired them as well.

Sap didn't belong to either side. While he was physically a demon, he had the same mindset of a plain human being. He faked a demon persona in a scary accurate way. He was manipulative. He could rig the case.

A breakthrough. He could handle convincing an entire crowd. His shred of hope was gone as soon as it arrived. His coworkers were a huge problem. They would never get convinced.

So why not dig up an old talent? Replicate someone's handwriting. It was easy, he had done it so many times.

With George, Sap brushed off forgery as a lame excuse. It was a viable way to make it so things go the way he wanted.

He would know. His plan was simple. Forge his boss' handwriting and hope they don't notice.

If it worked, George would go home. If not, he was screwed. Sap never took risks. He hated the thought of failure. He was willing to go above and beyond to avoid doing bad, which somewhat justifies how careless he is with his clients.

It was worth stepping out of his comfort zone. He finally felt some humanity. All because of an angel.

~

"How long does it take to get a court response?" George asks out of the blue. Dream was staring up at the ceiling, lost in his own thoughts.

"George, you submitted the appeal 2 hours ago. Relax." Dream says, turning to face the angel.

"Aren't you scared?" George asks, sounding rather sad. "It's been bothering me since we got home. You've wasted so much time and energy on me."

"Hey, it wasn't wasted. All I care about is seeing you go back where you belong."

That sentence carried so much weight. George had been questioning where he belonged for a few days now. He wasn't exactly happy in Heaven, but it gave him whatever he needed. In Heaven, Dream wouldn't be there.

"I don't want to leave you." George says, sounding serious. The two had grown so close in a short amount of time. Normally, those types of 'instant connection' relationships ended, but their bond felt... never ending.

"You don't have to stay because of me. I'm sure you'd be much happier when you don't need anything. No hunger or things like that, I mean."

George shook his head. "Being here has makes me feel more human than ever, honestly. I like it. I have a friend, that's you, of course. In Heaven... everyone just goes their own ways."

"You never made a single friend?"

"No, never. I'm glad my first one was you."

## Chapter 8

Yesterday had ended on a good note, but that day was gone now. Now, the two could only look forward.

“We’re supposed to go to the courthouse today.” George repeats to himself yet again. He’d been repeating that to himself over and over again.

“I’ll be right there with you, remember.” Dream tried to reassure. While he couldn’t exactly understand what George was feeling, he tried.

The bus ride back to the courthouse felt dangerously similar to the last time. Everything felt the same. The same stabbing pain of anxiety when the two stepped back inside the courthouse.

They were directed to a separate room, this time down the left hallway and the second door.

Standing in the room was Bad. His eyes widened upon seeing Dream not wearing a mask. “Wait, no way. You’re actually showing your face? I never thought I’d see the day. We can’t really talk about that right now, though. Take a seat.”

There were four chairs. Four?

Dream and George sat down next to each other, and Bad sat down as well.

“Are we waiting for someone?” Dream turned to ask Bad.

Bad nodded, “Yeah. We’re waiting for Sap. I’m not sure what’s going on.”

“Why are you here?” George questioned. Seeing Bad here was... something else. It felt wrong.

“Like I said, I’m not sure. They just told me to come here and gave no explanation.”

Dream raised an eyebrow. “That... doesn’t sound good.”

In a few minutes, Sap entered the room and sat in the final seat. Sap, of the four, seemed the most anxious.

Yet another person entered the room. It was the big guy. Sap’s boss. “I’m sure one of you knows what’s going on.”

“No?” George mutters, getting more and more nervous. Bad and the main judge were being vague. It was uncomfortable. What was going to happen to him?

Sap stood up. “For once, I’ll own up to something. I knew that George’s appeal would be rejected, so I tried rigging it. Of course, I got caught. The one time I was trying to be nice.”

“Wait, you’re not being serious.” Dream was the first to speak. There was silence from everyone else. What Sap had done was so out of character.

“I think it’s best that my boss explains what’s going to happen.”

The boss. A name was never used to refer to them. “Well, George, I decided that you will be sent to Earth to try and earn your place back. Dream, Darryl and Nick will be joining as well since they were involved in this... situation.”



Their real names were being used for once. That meant this was serious. Not a sick joke. The boss was being so formal it was sickening, even to Bad.

George was bouncing his knee. A habit he developed from being constantly nervous. “Are we just becoming... normal humans temporarily?”

“That’s the goal. I want to see how different you act as a normal person, because being an angel or a demon changes how you view things. Human minds are so different.”

There were so many questions. Would the four be working together, or be forced to go their own ways? Would their memories be wiped? The four were clearly assuming the worst.

“When are we being sent down?” Bad asks, surprisingly sounding indifferent about this entire situation.

“Well, there’s no point in letting you guys pack up, where you guys live has already been handled. Enjoy.”

There was a snap of a finger.

~

George had a hard time opening his eyes. Whenever they opened, he was hit by a blinding light. Sunlight?

He was in a bedroom. The light that was bothering him so much was creeping out of a small window to his right. Finally getting up, George closes the blinds.

He finally sees everything properly. Nobody else could be heard. No footsteps or chatter.

George’s heart sunk. Were the four separated from each other? He didn’t even want to try walking downstairs. Maybe the others were being sneaky and didn’t wake George up.

The house was pretty big, surprisingly. It felt way too big for him to be by himself, especially since the judge said that homes were planned out ahead of time or something like that.

Sitting down on a couch was Bad. He wasn’t alone, at least.

“Bad? Where’s the others?” George asks in a hushed tone. When he was scared or nervous in general, he spoke quietly.

Bad turned around. “Oh, you’re awake. I don’t know where they are. They probably live together.”

“I have to admit, splitting us up into a pair we didn’t expect was smart.”

“Yeah, it was. I’ve been trying to think of ways to find the others. There’s no way they’d put our houses next to each other. Is there any location that you and Dream visited a lot?”

George dug up some of his memories, mostly remembering when the two would hang out by fountains. It was a silly thing, but it would always help the two cool down. “Fountains. You know, the ones with water?”

“I know what a fountain is. What time would you guys normally go to places like that?”

“What is this, 21 questions?” George said, racking up more memories. “Around 2pm for some reason. I guess less people were out doing things around that time.”

That was right. Dream was strategic when it came to every little thing, including times where he’d go out. He never liked loud noises or crowds, so he’d always wait until the later hours to go out and invite George to tag along. It was always peaceful. This was the human world, however, so things might be different.

“Well, we have 6 hours until we go out then. Hopefully Dream has the same plan as you. I don’t know if you two can stand being away from each other for more than a day.”

“Why would you assume something like that?”

Bad just smiles. “I know good friends when I see them.”

## Chapter 9

Dream, for once, felt normal. He was just a human. The Earth was... odd. He was in a normal house. However, Dream was forced to live in the same house as Sap.

Following that logic, George and Bad probably lived together.

Sap seemed... tolerable now. He tried his best, which Dream could appreciate.

Dream's main concern was finding out where George and Bad were. What would George do?

Something that meant a lot to the both of them, likely. Specific times were a completely different story.

This was Earth. There would be humans everywhere constantly, which means a lot of noise. He hated it. Just the thought of being somewhere loud annoyed him.

Dream was snapped out of his trance when Sap spoke up. "Dude, you've been spacing out for 10 minutes. You alright?"

"Yeah, yeah, I'm okay. Being a human is just... different. Don't you notice that?" Dream questions. "Like, weaker and more vulnerable?"

"I wouldn't know, I'm not exactly an angel or a demon. I just... exist."

"Right. Why are you even a judge if you don't belong anywhere?"

Sap rolled his eyes at that sentence. "Why do you call yourself a demon if you're actually an angel?"

Nevermind.

Sap was the most unbearable person in the universe. He couldn't help but smile, though. Dream... couldn't always rely on George as a friend. He needed more, so befriending Sap would be a significant step forward.

"Sap. I know you kinda screwed me over a while ago, but... no hard feelings."

"I kinda forgot I even rejected your case. Glad you forgive me though." Sap replies, sounding confused. Sap's memories tended to get jumbled up since a lot of the cases he worked with were similar; the only one that stood out in a few years was George's.

"I might just try and lay back for today. I'm sure George and Bad can handle themselves. I want to get to know you."

Sap has a smile. A genuine smile. "Look at you, trying to make friends. My real name is Nick. Before I became a lawyer, I was a musician. I played violin."

Dream's eyes seemed to light up. Not too many demons played instruments, so he never got to talk to others about instruments. "Oh, I play an instrument as well. I'm not really good at it, but I play piano and guitar."

Similarities. You love to see it.

“Did you have any pets when you were alive?” Sap asks. “I had two cats and a dog. All really sweet.”

Reminiscing. Dream was remembering little details of his past life. He always focused on the little things. “I had a cat. Just the one.”

Those two questions were so simple, yet enough to bring the two closer. Who would’ve known? Talking was easier than Dream expected, especially since he was talking to an old ‘enemy’.

“What about your name? Your real one?”

Dream took a moment to think. Did he really want to tell his name to another person? If he told Sap, George would be the last person to know. Good. “My real name is Clay. Don’t use it though.”

“Dream sounds way cooler. I’d rather not call you Clay.”

“Good. I don’t tell people my name because it’s really awkward. I might have to go by that name since we’ll be here for a while.”

Sap rolled his eyes. “What? Are you afraid of getting bullied for having a weird name?”

“That’s bold coming from someone nicknamed Sap. I can and will bully you.” Dream teased. Things felt normal. Peaceful, even.

He was a human at last.

~

“What are we even supposed to do while we’re down here?” George asked Bad. Bad, of all people, should know what to do.

Bad was quick to reply. Yep. He knew what to do. “We’re supposed to earn our place back. Doing good things.”

George scoffed. “That’s so easy though!”

“I don’t think so. The acts of kindness have to be genuine. Whoever is deciding what to do with us can tell if we’re being nice just to get back, you get what I’m saying?”

George slowly nodded. It took a few seconds for him to properly process it, but it made sense. Bad was the smart one. Of course he knew everything. “So, what counts as a good deed? There’s so many little things but not enough... big things.”

“Saving a life, probably.” Bad responds.

“That’s a good one, duh. It’s not every day you get to save the life of someone. That would be something to do in the long run.”

“I remember reading that saving a life guarantees that you go to Heaven. Like, the negative things are completely forgotten.”

There was no way to tell how long earning back George’s place would take. That doesn’t even take into account how long it would take the others.

Sure, saving lives was easy as an angel. George was a human though. Everyone was a human. Nothing was going to be easy. "Let's not talk about this anymore." George says, turning away.

Adjusting to everything was difficult. First, it was the adjustment from Heaven to Hell. The constant discomfort. The terrifying noises that would keep George up at night. He hated it. The temperatures never change. Everything felt off. There was never any rain.

Then there was Earth. It changed. There were times where it was freezing and George didn't care. There were quiet noises that were calming. Birds. The jingling of the collar of dogs when they passed by the house.

George wanted to miss being human. He really did.

He didn't belong on Earth, though. It just wasn't his place anymore. He belonged somewhere now.

He would be willing to go to Hell and back if it meant staying by Dream's side.

And he did.

## Chapter 10

Being a human was unbearable. Emotions were sickening. Dream hated it. Normally, he was able to ignore most negative emotions. That's what demons always did. They dampened their emotions. They weren't needed.

Here he was, forced to live with emotions he couldn't identify. Sure, he had felt clinginess constantly, and anger. That was about it.

Dream had wanted to be a human for so long, and he was immediately regretting it.

He missed George. It was painfully obvious.

"Dude, have you still not thought of where to find George?" Sap asks. In Sap's hands is a drink in one of those plastic cups.

Dream hesitantly takes it and looks at the liquid. "We liked fountains and the quiet. Finding fountains is easy. Avoiding people? Not so much."

"You normally hung out at around 2, right? George is smart, he'd probably be waiting for you."

"You're probably right, I'll probably head to that one fountain I spotted. It's about to be 2 in an hour," Dream was still holding the red cup in his hand. There was no explanation of what was in it. "What's in the cup?"

"It's human stuff, I don't know. I just grabbed whatever I thought looked cool."

"Are you fucking serious?" Dream said, raising an eyebrow. That was the stupidest thing he had heard, ever. Which was saying a lot considering Dream and George lived with each other.

"It was in a see through green bottle, okay? Green is cool and shiny." Sap tries to defend himself. He lost his boldness, which was hilarious.

"Shiny? You got it because it was shiny? Did you even read the bottle?"

"It's not alcohol, I'm not that stupid. It's carbonated or something. I don't get it."

"Wait, you're kidding. Sap, this is soda. Have you seriously forgotten about soda?" Dream tries to hold back his laughter, but he ends up wheezing. That wheeze. The tea kettle had returned.

"Well, you can't blame me. I've been really busy being... a bad person. Taking care of myself wasn't exactly a priority. You know, feeding myself or things like that." Sap managed to say, but he was clearly flustered. Embarrassed.

"That's stupid. Sap, you really didn't care about yourself? At all?" Dream says, suddenly feeling bad. Not pity. Actual sympathy.

"Come on, my feelings don't matter. Honestly? I don't matter. I'm the one heartless judge who is just... there."

Dream was having a hard time being honest. Yes, Sap was a bad person. "You have a chance to improve yourself here. Don't beat yourself up over your past."

"My past was literally a day ago. It's there. It always will be. I'll forever be remembered as one

thing. It sucks, but I have to get over it.”

Dream was never one to comfort people. He never had someone that would come to him for help. It was sweet that Sap was comfortable enough to talk about his feelings. He admired that in a person; being able to talk or own up to your mistakes without feeling annoying.

“This is literally a new world. You and the version of you from Hell aren’t the same person, if that makes sense. You’ve changed so much already. You were willing to risk your job if it meant George getting out. I’m... proud of you.” Dream says. After his ramble, he gently places a hand on Sap’s shoulder and squeezes it.

He did that with George. He wasn’t here, though.

“Thank you... This means a lot. Being a human really gives you a new perspective on everything. It’s scary, but once we meet up with Bad and George, everything is gonna be alright.” Sap said, smiling for the first time in what felt like years.

~

George was waiting by the fountain. He couldn’t wait. He was too nervous. The thought of seeing Dream again was scary. In a good way, maybe. It would be a miniature wholesome reunion.

It had literally been 6 hours. It felt like centuries.

The park was fairly quiet, the occasional birds flying by or a passing car. Every so often a couple would walk through but leave immediately after. This was an ideal meeting spot. Hopefully Dream had the same idea.

Bad insisted on staying home for whatever reason; he had nothing else to do. Which irritated George a lot since he was already really nervous.

Bouncing his leg. There’s that bad habit again. Patience was so incredibly difficult. George honestly just wanted to run home without a word.

He didn’t have any way to tell the time, either. The last time he saw a clock was at the house. When he left, it was 1:43.

The walk took around 10 minutes. Surely Dream would be making his way over now.

George seemed to zone out, thinking the worst. Dream bailed on him. Of course he would.

When he finally decided to look away from whatever he was staring at, a menacingly tall person was sitting next to him. Dream? Was it really him?

“I figured that you’d be here.” That was Dream’s voice.

He was here.

“Yeah, I wasn’t expecting you to do the same,” George shakily replied. Fuck it. George pulled Dream into a hug. A violent one. “I missed you.”

Dream didn’t reciprocate. This didn’t feel real. This had to be a sick joke. This same thing has happened before. So long ago. But it still hurt.

Trust was terrifying. Dream still hadn’t learned. He had friends he told sensitive information to. Sap, George and Bad. He kept reminding himself that his friends were trustworthy and kind, but a

voice in the back of his head told him otherwise.

There was a moment of hesitation before Dream finally hugged George back.



## Chapter 11

Dream could feel George's hands grabbing at the fabric of his sweater, trying to get a proper grip.

"You're smart. I just... knew you'd be waiting for me here. That's crazy. We don't even need to talk to each other to know what to do." Dream says. Awkwardly, Dream begins to run his fingers through George's hair, which helped him relax a little.

George slowly pulls away, surprised by the random act of affection. "I-I know you too well. It's really quiet here. Just how you like it."

"Is Bad with you? I've been living with Sap."

"Oh, yeah. He's been pretty nice. He didn't want to come with me, though." George replies, stuttering slightly.

"It makes sense. He probably didn't want to get in the way of us being all happy. Which is a little upsetting because I'm close friends with him as well."

"Dream, did you hear what we have to do in order to earn our place back? Surely Sap would've told you something."

"No. We talked about... other things." Dream says, a little upset at the memory of their conversation. It was depressing.

George let out a sigh. Explaining things would be difficult, to say the least. "Oh. Bad said something about saving a person's life. He never specified in what way, though."

"In what way?" Dream questions. "What does that even mean?"

"Physically, for one. Like stopping someone from bleeding to death. The other way? Mentally."

Dream's heart sunk. How did he not think of that? What if he had already saved someone's life? Sap. It would make sense. "The thing Sap and I were talking about was about mental things. Does the saving a life thing count if it's someone involved in the... redemption?"

"Maybe. What did you two talk about specifically?" George asks. He knew nothing about Sap, so he was curious.

"He hates his past. He never took care of himself. It's scary to think how easily he hid something like that. How many people have I known that I didn't help?" Dream mutters, his voice breaking at the end.

He was being a hypocrite. He was doing the exact same thing as Sap.

Emotions sucked. This was probably the first time Dream had even come close to crying in decades.

"Hey," George says softly. He reaches out to do something, but quickly his hand shoots back. "It's... not your fault. Not everyone can express themselves. They're forced to be stoic. Like you with that mask, right?"

Dream forgot he even wore a mask, which was silly because he had worn it for almost a century. It had become his new face. He forgot it was even there at times.

Was that a metaphor? Had Dream been absentmindedly hiding everything about himself? He hadn't even told George his real name. "Yeah, it's the mask. I feel like I should tell you something. A lot of things."

George's heart dropped as well. He felt like a kid who was showing his parents his report card. "W-what's up?"

"My real name is Clay," Dream began. He wanted to insist that George still used his nickname, but he couldn't get the words out. "Call me whatever. I don't care."

"Clay? When we're alone together, sure."

"You were the last one to know. I already told Bad and Sap. I was scared to tell you because I didn't know how you'd react."

"To your real name? Did you think I was gonna make fun of you? I wouldn't do that."

"My brain is stupid. Paranoid. I care way too much of what others think of me." Dream says, slightly crossing his arms. He hated talking about his feelings so much. He was one to listen and deal with his own problems alone.

"Your looks... name. They don't matter. I love you for your personality."

Dream did not expect the compliment. Confession? Was this a spur of the moment thing while he was emotionally vulnerable. Smart. "I- Well. Thanks."

"Uh, yeah. No problem... Clay," George finally manages to say. The name was odd to say. It felt so wrong. Like an invasion of privacy. "Let's go to my house. I'm sure you want to see Bad again."

"Fine. Sap should be fine by himself. Let's go."

~

The house that Bad and George shared was shockingly familiar. It looked like Dream's old house back in Hell, but painted a shade of yellow. At least, George thought it was yellow.

Stepping inside, the living room was fairly organized. That wasn't surprising, the house was shared by two neat freaks, or just really good organizers.

Bad was nowhere to be seen. There weren't even any noises coming from upstairs. Dream noticed this. "Bad is probably outside or sleeping. You would know."

"At 3pm?" George questioned. Maybe Bad was staying up later than normal. That seemed... out of character.

"I'll go get him." Dream said. He seemed nervous, chewing at his bottom lip as he went upstairs.

Dream was at the top of the stairs. The first thing he noticed was that the bathroom door was completely shut. His hand hovered over the doorknob, not wanting to open it. He did anyway.

Bad was there. Staring at his reflection with an expression of uncertainty. "Oh no way! Hey, Dream. Its been like 7 hours since we've last talked."

"Yeah! I finally met up with George. He wanted me to come and hang out here."

"I'm glad that worked out for you guys. You two think alike. The whole meeting up at a place of

sentimental value? Genius.” Bad replied. His tone seemed... hurt? Sarcastic, even? “Does Sap live with you?”

Dream brushed off the dramatic change of personality from Bad. “Yeah. We’ve been getting along with each other quite well.”

“Of course you two have been getting along, you muffin head. When two people are forced to live together, you feel obligated to get along with each other. Not to mention you are actually really charismatic.”

“I thought I was awful at communicating. You can’t be serious.” Dream shakes off the compliment, not really wanting to take it.

“I’m happy that you two get to see each other. Like I said, I know good friends when I see them.” Bad replies, the ‘friends’ part said a little hesitantly.

“So, do you wanna come hang out with us? I’m not sure what we’ll be doing, but it’d be nice to have your company.” Dream offers, a smile on his face.

Bad nods, finally looking away from his reflection. “That sounds fun. Just the three of us.”

## Chapter 12

When one mask is taken off, another is put on.

Hearing the constant chatter between Dream and George could be exhausting. They were so loud.

Bad was sitting to the side and listening to the two talk. There really wasn't a place for him in the conversation; He was already pretty close with the two, so there wasn't much to catch up on.

"Why did you say that to me while we were at the fountain?" Dream asked, causing George to glance at him in confusion. "I love you for your personality."

"Oh. Well, I meant it. I do like you. A lot. In general, you got it?" George replies, sounding so casual, like there wasn't a third person in the room.

Bad was tired. There was the stabbing pain again. He stood up from his seat abruptly and left. Not just the room, the house in general. What was the point in staying? Everything was his fault. If he hadn't copied those papers, the four wouldn't be stuck on Earth.

It was dark outside. The street in front of him was barely illuminated by street lights and the occasional car. No stars were visible. It felt so... empty. Like an alternate reality.

Bad could still hear the loud talking from outside, so he moved a few more feet away in hopes of not hearing them. He felt so lost.

He was being replaced, wasn't he? He was supposed to be Dream's best friend. Sure, friend groups existed, but he was slowly stepping out of the picture.

The four of them. Three of them, now.

Bad should've stayed with his older friends. He regretted leaving them almost every day. He had no other choice, honestly.

He was hosting his own pity party. It was so easy to reconnect. Surely, phone calls could pass dimensions.

Bad stepped back inside to see the two still talking, laughing and smiling. How sweet. He was happy for them, whatever they had going on.

Approaching the nearest phone, Bad dialed a phone number. An old one. It probably wouldn't work.

There were a few rings before a voice finally picked up. "Who is this?" A strikingly familiar voice asked.

"Vincent, I can't believe this worked!" Bad muttered to himself in absolute disbelief.

"Well, where have you been all this time? Zak and I have been worried." Vincent replied. Despite the phone call taking place across dimensions, the quality was disturbingly clear.

"I messed up. In a lot of ways."

Vincent could be heard muttering some words under his breath. Probably in French. "Really? I heard. Everyone has been talking about it. They're saying you got banished or something."

Bad shook his head despite the fact that Vincent wouldn't see it. Paying attention to his friend rambling was difficult when there was a completely different conversation happening in the background. Using his free hand, Bad covered his ear that wasn't being occupied by the phone. The noises were quieter and a lot more muffled, which was... fantastic actually.

"I pretty much commit forgery. I was trying to help that George guy. You might've heard of him." Bad explains, beginning to pace around the area where the phone was.

"Forgery, huh?" Vincent says to himself. "I'm not gonna ask. Forgery is pretty cool, honestly. Especially when it comes to handwriting."

"Yeah, of course it's a fun talent. Say, you're pretty good at it," Bad begins to talk. "People shouldn't even have access to the archives when you can do things like that."

"I wouldn't do anything bad. You know me." Vincent says. His smile could practically be seen through the phone. Not a kind smile.

"I'd be careful if I were you. Talking all suspicious like that could get you in trouble." Bad had a thought in the back of his head. What if it was Vincent? He couldn't make it too obvious.

It would make sense.

Vincent had access to the archives, was good at copying handwriting, and had gone into hiding shortly after George got kicked out.

It was Vincent who framed George, wasn't it? It had to be. What a concept. It felt so... random.

After Bad finished that sentence, there seemed to be a bitter taste to the conversation. Vincent probably knew that Bad was suspicious.

"I'm gonna hang up. À plus." Vincent then hung up.

Bad glanced at Dream and George, who seemed to be a lot quieter. They finally used up all their energy. On what? Those two could talk for days. He had to tell them about Vincent. "You two, I think I know who did it."

George, of course, was the first to look up. He was the victim in this situation. "Really, who?"

"It might be Vincent. It sounds random, I know."

Dream slowly nodded. "It makes sense, actually. I've only talked with Vincent a few times, but I could already tell he's the guy with a crazy secret."

George seemed relieved. He finally had a sliver of hope. He could go home. He now had a reason to keep going. "Where did you get that idea?"

"Vincent was an old friend of mine. He works at the archives, fakes signatures constantly... I don't know where to start. I just know it's him." Bad explains. He sits down next to the three.

"There are plenty of other people that could've done it, though." George says, not exactly trusting Bad. He had every right to be unsure. This person who framed him screwed him over... a lot. He wanted to be absolutely certain of who the person was.

"Only 6 people have access to the archives. There's Vincent, Sap, Techno, Ponk, me... and Sky.

The only ones who can do forgery are Sap, Vincent and I. You already trust Sap of course. I hope you trust me.” Bad explains, not even bothering to talk more about the people he mentioned.

“Yeah. I trust you. I agree. I think it’s the Vincent guy as well.” George says, but a bit hesitant.

That’s fine. When Bad finally got up, indicating the end of the conversation, an envelope appeared in front of him, coming out of nowhere.

In neat letters, written on the envelope, were the words ‘You have earned back your place.’

Bad was confused, of course. He hesitantly opened the actual letter. He skimmed through it a few times before the realization hit him.

Bad had saved George’s life by finding out who framed him. Was George planning on...? No. No way.

Could angels even die twice?

## Chapter 13

The area surrounding the telephones always seemed emotional. The worse things always happened there.

George met Bad over the phone. It was where Bad started to feel replaced. Dream quit his job using the phone. Bad finally solved the mysterious case of who framed George.

So many important things happened.

Dream was fidgeting with the curly telephone wire, listening to Sap ramble on the other side. "Dude, I just want you to come over. It's literally 10 houses over. This whole thing will be so much easier when we're in the same house," He was silent for a moment before hanging up. "Sap is coming over."

Dream was right, of course. Constantly hopping between houses would be an annoyance.

Bad was left alone with his own thoughts. There was no way he could reveal that he already earned his place back. It was too soon. And he earned it for the scariest reason.

Was something going to happen to George if he didn't find out who the suspect was? The thought was painful, because there were so many potential things that could've happened.

Bad also couldn't leave so soon. The other three were so... clueless. They needed him. He was the smart one, of course.

There was also the burden of knowledge. He knew George would've died in some way, which was terrifying.

He was worried, for sure. He hated to admit it, but his friends didn't seem like the types to just... redeem themselves. Sap just didn't seem to want to put the effort. Dream was... indifferent about the situation.

Bad hated to think of his friends in the way he did, but... it was the truth.

In a few minutes, Sap arrived at the house as well. There wasn't too much to do besides doing that cute reunion hug.

"So, what happened?" Sap was eager to ask.

"We just hung out and caught up on stuff, I guess. Had a heart to heart with George about personal stuff." Dream was the first to reply, ignoring whatever conversation he had with Bad in the bathroom.

That was probably for the best. Ever since then, there has been a bitterness whenever Dream talked to Bad.

"Personal stuff?" Sap raised an eyebrow at that sentence, especially since there was no further explanation.

George wasn't giving an explanation either until his eyes widened. "Oh my Go- not saying it, how did we forget? We know who framed me. Some Vincent guy."

"Ah, yeah. I know him. We talked a lot," Sap began. Damn, everyone seemed to know who this

Vincent dude was. “He seems kinda shady. I don’t know why. And I’m supposed to be the dense one.”

There seemed to be a lot of anxiousness in the room. Surely, there was something out there that humans did for fun.

They didn’t exactly have easy access to everything. There was no technology besides a wall on the telephone.

Talking clearly wasn’t working out, either, because a lot of the time someone ends up getting left out.

Human life just sucked. Something was always going wrong.

Sure, everyone was accounted for and given a proper home and enough food, but that was it. The bare minimum.

Talking couldn’t be entertaining forever.

~

He couldn’t help but feel pity. Watching the four struggle down in Earth was entertaining at first, but now it was boring.

Techno was bored, which meant a lot. He’d normally find entertainment in small things.

This wasn’t normal. At this point, Techno just wanted the whole ‘redemption’ to be over with.

If they really wanted to earn their place back, he had a better idea. A compromise, probably.

It’d be hard to seek one, but there was a chance. Techno was well loved and admired by most other angels, especially his higher ups.

This was child’s play, honestly.

Techno was in his office, observing what Dream, George, Sap and Bad. He was keeping track of their actions, tallying up good points whenever they did something decent. It was easy noticing every small detail. Explaining things, and in this case observing, was his strong suit.

He had already gotten enough points tallied for Bad to go back. All because a person got revealed.

He was well aware that Vincent was the one that framed George. There wasn’t much he could do about it, much to his annoyance. He wouldn’t speak up about it either; it just wasn’t his place.

In fact, almost all of his friends knew it was Vincent. Every single one of them.

This was George’s battle. He could rig the points, but that was too risky.

Ponk, one of the other calculators, had nearly risked getting caught when adding Bad’s points and purposefully giving him more than he should have.

Everyone was rooting for George to earn his place back.

A gentle knock on his door interrupted Techno’s thoughts. Vincent entered the room, immediately taking a seat. “How are you doing, Techno?”



“Everything is absolutely perfect. They’ll be on Earth for a while.” Techno replied, sounding sarcastic. He always sounded sarcastic, so it was easy to misinterpret what he was saying. “I can’t tell if you’re serious or not. How are things really going?”

“Like I said, perfectly fine.” Techno repeats, trying not to sound too annoyed. No point in being rude, even though he’s talking to a criminal.

Vincent sat down on the nearest chair, indicating he wasn’t planning on leaving. “I’m sure you wouldn’t mind me staying, then.”

“Yeah, make yourself at home, I guess,” Techno replied, sounding both annoyed and uncomfortable. “Bad earned his place back but he’s not leaving.”

“He’s too nice, of course he’s staying,” Of course. Vincent and Bad were friends, so they obviously knew each other quite well. Probably like the back of their hands. “He’ll probably stay until everyone else gets back. Stupide.”

“Chill out. You said it yourself. Don’t be surprised.”

“Can’t we just force him to come back? That’d be so easy.”

Techno rolled his eyes. So pushy. “We can’t force him. He has to leave on his own free will. Respect that.”

There was something bothering Techno. What if Bad just... never left? Bad has clearly shown signs of just wanting to leave everything behind.

Maybe it was for the best.

## Chapter 14

Dream knew something was wrong the moment an envelope appeared in his hand. Just out of nowhere.

It was signed by high ranking officials, which was even weirder. Inside the envelope was a letter saying he had officially earned his place back.

He hadn't even done anything. In fact, he'd go as far as saying he hadn't done any good thing.

Dream kept fidgeting with the letter, extremely lost. He couldn't just leave. Sure, he actually considered leaving at first, but with the other three still needing help... he couldn't.

He stood in his bedroom, blankly staring out the window, watching birds pass by. He felt the area next to him get occupied. When Dream glanced over, George was there.

"You've been really quiet. Are you okay?" George asks, his voice gentle.

Dream slowly nodded, his gaze still fixed on outside. Everything seemed so peaceful today. Besides the letter, of course. He needed to get his mind off that. "Do you want to go somewhere? It doesn't matter where."

"Yeah, that sounds cool. We can try and find animals or something!"

Perfect. Everything should be fine. Dream finally looked away from the window and got up, leaving the room first. Like old times. Dream would always leave first.

As the two stepped outside, the warm temperature was jarring, which reminded them of where they used to live.

It was hard to even say the word now. It wasn't that it was traumatic, but that they just hated it. A lot.

The sidewalk was large enough so that the both of them could stand side by side. The neighborhood the two walked in seemed so normal compared to everything else.

It looked like... their old home. Still not saying it. Except the houses were more colorful. George wouldn't notice that little detail unfortunately. Maybe one day. Aren't there glasses that help things like that?

That was something to think about in the future.

The sidewalk, which the two were still observing, was littered in chalk pastel-colored drawings of animals.

"Look, we found a cat." Dream smiled, pointing at one of the chalk drawings. The drawing was messily scribbled, clearly done by a child. Cute.

A smile grew on George's face as well at the sight. On the contrary, right next to it was another drawing, this time much more detailed.

George couldn't help but admire it. The two were so different, yet the same. The two cat drawings were like him and Dream, going by that overanalyzing logic. He kept that thought to himself and kept walking.

By now the temperature seemed to cool off, which was a relief. Likely because the two were talking underneath a bunch of trees. George stopped underneath the shade. "This is nice, let's just sit here."

Everything was so quiet. Nothing but the rustling of leaves when the wind blew.

The envelope kept creeping its way into Dream's mind. It was so annoying. Turning his head to face George, he let out a shaky sigh. "I got an envelope. Saying that I earned my place back."

George was surprisingly quick to respond. "I know. You were obviously hiding something. What did you do?"

"I have no idea. It just... appeared," Dream began to explain. He pulled the envelope out of his hoodie pocket, handing it to George. It was a green envelope with a red seal on it. "Someone is trying to get us back."

"Really, who would do that?"

Dream's mind wandered back to the conversation with Bad from last night. He mentioned some other people who had access to some archives. Ponk, Techno and Sky, huh? It had to be one of them; maybe even multiple of them. That was comforting, knowing that someone out there was rooting for them. "The people that Bad mentioned. Obviously not Vincent, though."

"When do you think everyone else will get theirs? I had to be the first, right?"

George shakily shook his head, hesitant to speak. He was going to admit something. "Bad saved my life, in a way. When he told me about the potential suspect... I finally decided to not give up. I was so close to just quitting and accepting my fate."

"You know I wouldn't have let you." Dream replies. He keeps nervously glancing over at the envelope in George's hands, beginning to wonder if the envelope was even real or not. This had to be some sick joke. To test his morals.

He wouldn't fall for it.

George after a while handed the envelope back. "Bad has to have one of these as well. If that's the case, Sap and I still need to do something. I'm lost on that, honestly."

"I'm sure things will work out. Maybe someone will give you a letter as well. You're the most important person here, you deserve it more than me," Dream says, still fidgeting with the envelope and not putting it away. "You should take it."

"I-I can't do that! Drea- Clay. I want to earn it." George had turned away at this point, not wanting to start a fight.

"Come on, I won't stop until you take it. Like I said, you deserve it. You've been through way too much. Please."

The thing was, both of them were incredibly stubborn. It was a constant back and forward, causing random people who passed by to give an odd look.

Eventually, George let out a sigh of annoyance. "Fine, I'll take it."

Dream handed the letter to George.

George felt so wrong holding the envelope. Would this even work for himself? It was Dream's; it probably had his 'name' in it and everything.

The two finally stood up from underneath the tree. "We should probably head home. Bad is going to worry about us."

The walk back was nothing special. The same chalk drawings, now slightly faded from other people carelessly stepping on them.

When they entered the house yet again, Sap and Bad were holding envelopes as well.

"Dream, George? Have you guys gotten one as well?" Bad quickly asked, shooting up from his seat rather abruptly.

"I did have one. I gave it to George though." Dream replies, slightly gesturing towards the envelope still visible in George's hands.

Bad slowly nods, looking proud. It was calming to see the random act of generosity. "Well, we got ours out of seemingly nowhere. Maybe you'll get another one, Dream."

"I can only hope. Otherwise, you'll be waiting on me, and that sucks." Dream sounds rather embarrassed. He unintentionally wasted the time of everyone else.

Everyone waited. And waited. They sat and talked for what seemed like hours.

Nothing came.

## Chapter 15

Everyone had parted ways after waiting for too long. Dream, however, remained downstairs with George.

The sound of a coffee machine whirring could be heard from the kitchen. It was only 8pm, and the two had made a mutual agreement to pull an all-nighter for the first time in years.

Sure, the two had plenty of energy already, but they'd probably need a 'backup' source.

The room was already pitch black because the curtains were covering the windows. The only thing lighting up the room was a bunch of fairy lights shaped like cats.

It was the most subtle of a light source, but it worked. It was a nice environment to just... think.

Since Dream gave his letter to George, it was obviously George's now. Giving up your letter like that should be enough to redeem yourself. Apparently not.

Maybe just handing the letter over didn't count, and George still had to earn his.

"...Clay?" George said out of the blue. Using his real name still felt weird. He'd only used it twice. The two couldn't really make eye contact because of the darkness. "Are you actually staying up?"

"Yeah, of course I am. I doubt you can get the letter while you're asleep." Dream replies. The sound of him shifting in his seat could be heard. Likely getting more comfortable.

"I'll probably end up falling asleep by accident," George says. "I've had some vague idea of a sleep schedule for a while, so this is different."

Dream just nods, not really wanting to talk. There weren't many words needed for what was happening. Just anticipation.

Imagining the familiar smell of an envelope. Hoping to feel the texture of it between his fingers. They were so close to being 'normal'.

The two sat there, taking in every moment. Each... sense was being used. The anticipation was killing them.

They wanted to go back home so bad.

The darkness seemed comforting. Not seeing anything was actually relaxing. It gave George memories of being at a sleepover. The memory was especially strong since Dream was there. It felt like they had known each other for years.

The silence was peaceful as well. They could focus on the outside noises like crickets or the wind blowing.

There was another sound. Footsteps outside. A knock on the door.

Dream was quick to get up, being careful not to trip over anything. This seemed familiar. Dream's hand hovered over the doorknob.

Like with Bad. He didn't want to open it. He didn't want to see or expect anything.

When he opened the door, there was someone there with... pink hair? He wore a red long coat and his hands were stuffed in the pockets. "Ah, the quartet. It took me ages to actually get here. I'm Techno. Wake your other friends up."

Dream was quick to flick on the living room light. He took a moment to adjust. George was muttering a complaint behind him. "Wait, Techno? I heard about you. Yeah... I'll go get the others." He could be heard rushing upstairs and talking rather loudly before coming downstairs with Sap and Bad.

Techno smiled upon seeing the four together. "Alright. I'm here to get you guys out. A lot of people are on your side. You can thank me for that."

George, still annoyed, spoke. "How are we getting back? Like... teleporting?"

"Yeah, actually. I hope you're ready. We'll be brought right to the courthouse." Techno says, sounding almost too relaxed.

Before any of them could speak, Techno had snapped his fingers.

~

The courthouse they were in front of was different. It wasn't overgrown. In fact, it was the opposite. Plain and barren. Everything was neat and perfect, always symmetrical.

This was perfection. There were just... no flaws. It was a strange sight to see after being on Hell and Earth for so long.

Was this Heaven, then?

Of course, Bad and George would know this place.

Sap and Dream were just visitors. They definitely wouldn't be allowed back in Heaven after all this.

Stepping into the building itself was a completely different experience. The floors were tiled a pale yellow color, not a single scuff mark in sight.

The pure perfection and brilliancy was admirable. Everything was taken care of here.

Techno led the four into a room, where a bunch of unfamiliar people were waiting.

Sitting down in a seat a few feet away was Vincent. They actually got him, huh?

The four sat down, the anxiety starting to kick in. This was real. It was so sudden.

"Good, we can begin now." A mysterious voice said. Looking up, the voice belonged to... nothing. It was just a voice.

"I'll get straight to the point," Techno says, taking a deep breath. "George is innocent. The other archive members and I have made a mutual agreement that the actual suspect in this case is Vincent. Vincent has access to the archives, so he can get George's files. He is also good at forgery, so imitating handwriting isn't too big of an issue. Also, honestly, while Vincent is kind of an ass, he also performs a lot of miracles, so him saving that family wouldn't be too surprising."

"How is the handwriting relevant in this situation?" The voice questions.

Techno begins pacing the room, getting back into his rambling mindset. “In order to even go down to Earth as an angel, you need to sign paperwork. Vincent could’ve simply copied George’s signature and submitted the paperwork. During this time, George was... asleep. Surely someone would’ve noticed he was gone.”

Of course nobody had noticed. He kept to himself, never really going out of his way to make a place for himself.

During all of this, Vincent hadn’t said a word.

Had they done it?

This case was simple. It had been worked on and debated for quite a while behind closed doors. What Techno had said just a few minutes ago was only a fragment of his full argument.

It was now or never.

The voice was humming. Not a song, but that hum when you’re faced with a difficult decision.

George was shaking. This was it. This would change everything. He could feel his hand be grabbed. Looking up, Dream was holding his hand. The gentle squeeze.

The voice finally spoke. “I have found George to be... not guilty. George will be able to return home. However, he will not be able to speak with his three friends at all. That is the catch.”

“I won’t go then.” George says, finally speaking up.

He was willing to give up everything to stay with them. Even if it meant wasting all of this time and effort. It didn’t matter anymore.

He finally had his priorities straight. Stay.

## Chapter 16

That simple act of defiance. If it had happened a few years ago, a revolution would've started.

Dream still had a grip on George's hand. "George, you can't just stop now. Go. You've worked so hard for this."

George prys Dream's hand away and sighs. "I can't just leave this all behind. I can't leave you guys, honestly. I'm willing to stay in Hell if it means I can keep hanging out with you."

The 'you' was mainly focused on Dream.

The voice sounded... disappointed. "You can't do that. We've spent a very long time on your case."

Techno was eager to speak. "How about a compromise? George can keep hanging out with his friends, but he doesn't go back to Heaven. We make a personal area for them all to stay in. An inbetween, pretty much."

George nodded in agreement. "I'd be okay with that, honestly. I'm sure everyone else is too."

Sap and Dream seemed to agree. Bad, however, looked hesitant, but after a moment nodded as well.

"It's a unanimous decision. Please." Techno says. There was no way he could make eye contact; the entity he was debating with was nothing but a voice. Despite that, it felt like Techno was staring directly at it.

"Fine. If that is what George wants, he'll get it."

That was it. It seemed to go by so quickly. George kept reminding himself that this case was being debated for ages.

Well, obviously not ages. Just a pretty long time.

What was going to happen?

"You know where to bring them, Techno."

Yeah. Anywhere but here.

~

There was a house in an open field of grass. The temperature of the air seemed just right.

It felt perfect. For once.

Techno stood behind as the other four stepped forward.

It felt calm. It felt like home despite the fact none of them had been here before.

There was a porch where there was a swing. The cushions were covered in red-orange leaves. It looked like it wasn't touched in ages.



Hanging by the front door was a dreamcatcher that was colored red, green, blue and black.

Stepping inside, the house seemed like nothing special. It was sweet and simple. Ideal and cozy.

In the living room was a small coffee table with a rectangular white box on it. Written on it was the word 'enchroma'.

There was an envelope. Envelope, of course there was. Written on it in neat handwriting was "From all of us, to George"

George gently picked up the box, not knowing what was inside. Sliding the box open, there was a pair of black lens glasses with a white rim. "What is this? Glasses?"

Bad had a smile on his face. "Put them on. While looking at Dream."

Dream took a step in front of George without a word.

This was terrifying. What was going on? Still, George put on the glasses. For a moment, nothing seemed different. Until his eyes landed on Dream's hoodie.

Green? Looking up to make eye contact, he saw green as well.

These were colorblind glasses. George was at a loss for words. "Who got them?"

"Sap, Bad, Techno and a bunch of other people. It was my idea. I felt bad because... whenever we saw things together, I could never describe them properly. The chalk drawings? Those were in pink. Those flowers by my old house were orange. I paid attention to little things and you couldn't. God, I'm rambling."

George didn't respond. He was too busy looking at all the new colors. It was beautiful.

How did he miss out on so much?

Now he could see everything. The walls were painted a soft pink color. There were paintings hanging as well with a lot of other colors.

He loved it.

Bad was the first to break the silence. Not the negative type of silence this time. "So here, I guess we just hang out. We can freely travel to Earth whenever we want, so we should never get bored."

"Wait, how would you know?" Sap asks, raising an eyebrow. Yeah, Bad seemed to know everything, of course he did. He seemed to know almost too much at times.

"It's common knowledge, you muffin head," The random word. It was funny. "It rarely happens, though. So we should appreciate this. The best part is we can still enter our respective places. So George and I can still go to Heaven whenever we want and come back here safely and with no consequences."

Yeah, that works.

George had his closure.

What about Dream? He'd never really gotten his place back. He'd been missing for ages, and when he appeared out of nowhere, nobody noticed.

Nobody. Not a single person.

Dream felt selfish to make things about himself. Today was the day for George to be happy.

But it hurt. It had been 100 years, definitely, but he used to be talked about a lot. People wanted to know where he went.

Nobody cared. It made sense.

He wasn't exactly a perfect person. Even when he was an angel. They expected perfection.

While the other 3 celebrated and kept pointing out colors to each other, Dream stood to the side and watched.

Remember. This is George's moment. Be happy for him. He was happy. This was everything he could've wanted and more. Stay with George and watch him be happy.

Happy and smiling.

It meant a lot for Dream to finally see it. Genuinely. Before, it all felt fake.

It was hard to smile back.

~

The air had grown warmer. A pleasant kind of warmer. The four sat under a tree, watching the sunset.

George was finally seeing it properly. The yellows and oranges; the pinks and purples? Gorgeous.

Silence seems to be a recurring thing. Just enjoying each other's presence.

Dream found himself shifting positions again. The moss surrounding the base of the tree wasn't enough to make it comfortable. Everyone else was smiling and laughing.

Dream still watched. He could feel someone staring at him.

"Hey, Dream. You've been really quiet. Are you feeling alright?" George asks, putting a hand on his shoulder.

No point in pretending, right? This was his best friend. Dream felt bitter tears running down his face. "Honestly? No. I never have been."

## Chapter 17

Everything seemed to go so quickly. George's case felt like only a few seconds.

Time screeched to a halt. George had a very obvious look of sadness. Not even trying to be discreet. "Why haven't you told me? That you were upset, I mean."

It was just time for memories to be made.

"It doesn't matter honestly. I'm just confused. Ever since I met you, everything has felt different. In a good way, I guess." Dream replies, his gaze beginning to just look off into the distance.

"You said you never have been... alright. I get it. You were stuck. You never belonged. We're the same."

"Yeah, of course. I'm just... tired. I don't know why."

George stands up from his spot under the tree, grabbing Dream's hand and forcing him to stand as well. "We're gonna explore. Not sure where."

They walked. Somewhere. Leaving Sap and Bad to talk to each other on their own.

There was a river. Shallow enough to see the pebbles, grass and dirt covering the bottom. Flat, black rocks would stick out of the water occasionally, which would make a makeshift set of stepping stones.

Dream crossed over them first. George, of course, followed, almost slipping on the rocks a few times.

"How long does this go on for? Surely this place isn't infinite. That would take up too many resources." Dream asks, looking around the area. The surrounding trees seemed to stretch on for miles and miles. The trees were so thick that when he looked up, the sky wasn't visible.

The ground was covered in grass, flowers and bunches of twigs and fallen leaves. It felt natural, yet deep down it was all hand crafted.

The attention to detail was insane.

Normally that was concerning. It didn't matter anymore. They were safe here.

"Maybe just a clever cutoff. Like a bunch of cliffs. Maybe we could climb those. If they exist." George replies, smiling at the idea. There were so many possibilities here. No limits.

"Maybe one day. We have plenty of time."

~

There was a distinct smell of books. The hint of vanilla and fresh paper.

There was a room in the main house that was lined with books. Wall to wall, sorted by color and genre.

In George's hand was a black book with an angel drawn on it. Quickly, he took a seat next to Dream, who had a book as well.

"You're reading a book with an angel. Of course," Dream lightly chuckles. He was currently wrapped up in a blanket with a book as well. His arm lifted up to cover George with the blanket as well and moving closer. "Glad the blanket was lying around. It's cold in here."

George opens his book and skims the first page a few times. He kept getting distracted by the person next to him. "Wasn't there a fireplace in here somewhere?"

"Yeah, but honestly this is better. Right by the window. The view is... pretty. You can see everything."

George lets out a quiet laugh. "Mhm. See that cloud? It's shaped like a cat."

"Oh, yeah it does!" Dream says, laughing. He had set the book aside by now to just look outside and admire everything.

Just looking. It had become therapeutic to find small details of things.

"Do you think we'll ever get bored? There's only so much we can do." George asks, sighing. Boredom was the main enemy. Of course it was.

"Not when I'm with Sap, Bad and you."

~

The air was chilly, but still. The familiar scent of firewood surrounded the group.

In between them was a campfire, circled by large grey rocks and large logs that were originally a white color, similar to birch, were now black and burnt up after a while.

Dream held a guitar in his hand, playing a song he had learned. The other three listened in respectful silence. He'd been so scared to demonstrate what he'd learned. "That's all I got so far."

Bad had an encouraging look on his face. The proud looking smile, kind of. "It sounded great! I'm proud of you."

Dream set the guitar on the ground next to him, embarrassed. He had a hard time accepting a compliment like that. "It's nothing special... but thanks."

The four talked. They didn't stop. Now, they had dozens of things to ask. Their pasts... how they died.

It was brief. Things like that weren't talked about a lot due to trauma or just... being bored.

"George?" Dream asks, but whispering. "Did you really mean it? Those... two times you said you loved me?"

"Y-yeah. I meant it. I wouldn't do that to you." George replies, adjusting his seat to sit up properly. His gaze was still locked onto the

“That’s good,” Dream says to himself. “Because I’d sound stupid if I said it back without you actually meaning it.”

There was a silence.

Dream let out a wheeze. “Dude, I love you too.”

“Oh,” Is all George says. “I’m glad the feeling is mutual.”

~

They had reached the cliffs. The ones they thought did exist. The ones that indicated the end of their home area.

“Come on, they’re not that tall! It’s so easy!” Dream shouts, beginning to climb up.

George lets out a sigh of annoyance and begins climbing as well. After a few seconds, he lost his grip and fell.

Dream was already at the top. His annoying yet hilarious wheeze could be heard from all the way down. “Come on! It’s barely taller than me!”

“That’s really high up for me, Clay!”

“Are you already giving up? Seriously, try again!”

George tried again. Eventually, well, not that long. In about a minute, he reached the top as well and sat besides Dream.

“It’s pretty. I guess we were right about the cliff thing.” George says absentmindedly.

“We just keep finding the best spots. Before I met you, I’d hang out at areas like this and it was just boring. I’m with you now. As cheesy as this sounds, you’ve made everything better.” Dream responds. He wasn't looking at the view.

Everything was perfect. Everyone seemed to have their own closure.

To think this all started because of a huge mistake.

A fall, one could call it,

George had felt stuck on the ground, and whenever he tried stand, he’d topple down again.

He finally got up.

[end]

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